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SUBJECT: FREEDOM AGENDA: KUWAITI WOMEN CELEBRATE FIRST ANNIVERSARY
OF FULL POLITICAL RIGHTS

¶1. May 16 marked the one-year anniversary of the historic parliamentary decision granting Kuwaiti women full political rights. The Ambassador attended an event entitled "Together towards a Promising Partnership" under the patronage of Amir Shaykh Sabah Al-Ahmad and attended by Crown Prince Shaykh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Prime Minister Shaykh Nasser Mohammed Al-Sabah. Organized by the Women's Institute for Development and Training, the ceremony was well-attended by men, women, and children and included many prominent Kuwaiti figures. (Note: Several activists in the suffrage struggle went to the National Assembly to follow the latest developments regarding the amending of the electoral constituencies (septel). End note.)

¶2. Women's rights activist and Lebanese MP Bahiya Al-Hariri, also the sister of the late Rafiq Al-Hariri, delivered the keynote address. Women's Institute Chairwoman Kawthar Al-Joua'an hailed the efforts of the late and current Amir, as well as Kuwaiti MPs who supported women's political rights. The event concluded with a film about the history of Kuwaiti women, showcasing their strength and independence while their husbands went pearl diving for months on end and highlighting their academic achievements. It also detailed the 40-year struggle for political rights and ended with the appointments of the first female Cabinet member, Minister of Planning and Minister of State for Administrative Development Affairs Dr. Masouma Mubarak, and two women -- Shaykha Fatima Al-Sabah and Fawzia Al-Baher -- to the Municipal Council.

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